



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Feb. 14, 2008

For immediate release

- 1. EPA approves Iowa's water quality standards**
- 2. Boil order issued for Lisbon drinking water**
- 3. Manure application on frozen ground may lead to unintended consequences**
- 4. DNR-Funded conservation practices reduce water pollution in 2007**

EPA APPROVES IOWA'S WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

MEDIA CONTACT: Adam Schnieders, DNR, at (515) 281-7409.

DES MOINES — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved Iowa's new water quality standards, adding protection to thousands of miles of Iowa streams and rivers.

The new standards add protection for recreational uses on 23,800 miles of stream and for aquatic life on 14,000 miles of stream.

"These changes allow us to better protect Iowa's rivers and streams," said Adam Schnieders, who works with water quality standards for the DNR. "This additional protection applies to streams that were minimally protected for recreation or for supporting aquatic life in the past, and will result in many wastewater treatment plants having to comply with more stringent discharge limits on a number of streams."

As required by the Clean Water Act, the DNR submitted new and revised standards to the EPA in early 2006 and late 2007. Main changes to the previous water quality standards include:

- All of Iowa's perennial rivers and streams (as well as intermittent streams with perennial pools) that before did not have a stream use designation are now

protected for primary contact recreation use, like swimming, and aquatic life, unless stream assessments show they can not support these uses.

- Revising the criteria necessary to protect aquatic life and human health uses considering the latest science.
- Adding more protection to streams by more accurately determining stream flows.
- Adding protection to streams where the majority of the flow is created by discharge from a wastewater treatment plant.

With the EPA's approval, the DNR is now able to implement the new standards for the state of Iowa.

Writer: Jessie Brown

#

BOIL ORDER ISSUED FOR LISBON DRINKING WATER

MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Wade or Michele Smith, DNR Manchester field office, at (563) 927-2640.

LISBON — The DNR is asking Lisbon residents in Linn County to boil their drinking water following water main breaks and a fire in Mount Vernon.

The significant fire in nearby Mount Vernon on Wednesday created a heavy demand for water. Paired with two water main breaks, there is very low pressure in Lisbon's drinking water system. Because of this, the city has activated a restricted-use well that may have high levels of bacteria.

Due to the potential for bacterial contamination, the DNR is recommending that residents boil the water before using it for drinking or cooking, or to use an alternative source of water. Residents should boil water used for drinking or cooking, brushing teeth, food preparation or any other purpose involving human consumption. City water may still be used for bathing.

Boiling destroys bacteria and disease-causing organisms, which may be in the water. Water should be brought to a boil, boiled one minute and then allowed to cool before using. More information on disinfecting water is available on the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or from the city at (563) 637-2269.

Residents should continue to boil their water until the DNR notifies them that water is meeting standards and is safe to drink. The DNR will lift the boil advisory after all samples have tested negative for the presence of bacteria.

The City of Lisbon is working with the DNR to resolve the situation. The city is repairing the water main and will flush water lines and collect bacteria samples. City officials are

searching for funding to construct a new well. The city also issued a preliminary public notice of the boil advisory Wednesday evening.

Writer: Jessie Brown

#

MANURE APPLICATION ON FROZEN GROUND MAY LEAD TO UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

MEDIA CONTACT: Dan Olson, Atlantic DNR Field Office, at (712) 243-1934.

DES MOINES – While it is not recommended, winter manure application is sometimes necessary due to limited storage or unanticipated weather or facility conditions.

“Animal producers know the value of lost nutrients, especially with fertilizer costs soaring, but they may not know the risks of winter application,” said Dan Olson, an environmental specialist at the Atlantic DNR field office.

Applying manure from now until the ground thaws will be extremely risky. It could result in manure flowing over land or through tile lines into streams. It also results in phosphorus washing away, instead of binding to the soil as it does in warmer weather.

Olson urges producers to watch weather and field conditions carefully and to keep a wary eye on levels in the manure storage structures. That can help them avoid applying at the worst possible time.

Producers should contact the local DNR field office to discuss viable alternatives if storage is filling up. If field conditions are bad, they may need to consider alternatives such as pumping to another pit or transferring manure to another site.

“If you end up applying, look for high flat areas located a long way from surface waters,” he said. “Stay away from tile lines near the soil surface and tile inlets.” The DNR recommends applying only on fields with slopes of four percent or less and where soil erosion controls are in place.

“Some producers may think that if you follow DNR recommendations or abide by required separation distances it will keep you out of trouble,” he said. “But the fact that you observed the setback does not guarantee manure won’t reach a stream. If it does, the producer could face a penalty for causing a water quality violation or possibly a fish kill.”

Olson added that, for open lot producers, manure can really get moving during periodic late winter thaws.

“With fertilizer costs up and supplies tight, producers will want to take full advantage of these nutrients and avoid causing water quality problems or fish kills,” Olson concluded.

More information is available on the Iowa Manure Management Action Group's Web site at <http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/pubs/imms/vol3.pdf>

Writer: Karen Grimes

###

DNR-FUNDED CONSERVATION PRACTICES REDUCE WATER POLLUTION IN 2007

MEDIA CONTACT: Steve Hopkins, DNR watershed improvement, (515) 281-6402.

DES MOINES — Conservation practices installed in fiscal year 2007 kept more than 19,000 tons of soil from reaching Iowa streams and lakes, according to numbers released today by the DNR. Put that amount of soil in dump trucks, and you'd have a line of trucks six miles long.

The numbers indicate that conservation practices on agricultural and urban land are effectively reducing pollutants reaching Iowa's water. Local watershed projects work with landowners to install conservation practices in a watershed, which is an area of land that drains into a lake or stream. Common conservation practices include wetlands, ponds, terraces and buffers. These practices reduce the amount of pollutants — sediment, nutrients and bacteria — reaching a lake or stream.

Each year, the DNR helps fund a number of local watershed projects that help Iowans improve their water. Of those projects, 22 reported on practices installed during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007. From Oct. 1, 2006 to Sept. 30, 2007, those conservation practices had the following results:

- Reduced sediment reaching streams and lakes by at least 19,143 tons per year.
- Reduced phosphorus reaching streams and lakes by at least 25,172 pounds per year.
- Reduced nitrogen reaching streams and lakes by at least 101,333 pounds per year.

These conservation practices will continue to reduce pollutants at the same rate if they are properly maintained. The numbers apply only to practices installed in 2007 through DNR-funded watershed projects and do not reflect the total effects of all conservation practices in the state.

The DNR has tracked annual sediment and phosphorus load reductions since 2004. Practices installed through DNR watershed projects in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 now collectively reduce sediment reaching Iowa's waters by 76,863 tons per year and phosphorus loading by 131,900 pounds per year.

Sediment can make water cloudy, damage the habitat of fish and other aquatic life, and fill in lakes and streambeds. High levels of nutrients, like phosphorus, can cloud the water, increase drinking water costs and lead to poor aquatic life diversity.

“Iowans have shown they can make a difference in our state’s water quality, and as impressive as these numbers are, these only represent a small number of projects in one year,” said Steve Hopkins, who coordinates the DNR’s watershed improvement program. “Reducing pollution reaching our streams and lakes is just one step in improving our water, and we look forward to working with Iowans on more water quality improvement efforts.”

The Section 319 program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides DNR funding for nonpoint pollution programs. The DNR generally funds local watershed projects in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Division of Soil Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Writer: Jessie Brown